

free. We will know it is here when Miguel Sigler Amaya is reunited with his brothers, and they can say what they think and can come and go as they please. And we will know it is here when the Ladies in White no longer make their silent vigils or live in constant fear of assault or arrest.

Until that day comes, the United States will continue to shine a bright and revealing light on Cuba's abuses. We will continue to tell the stories of Cuba's people, even when a lot of the world doesn't want to hear them. And we will carry this refrain in our hearts: *Viva Cuba Libre*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Raul Castro Ruz and former President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on the National Economy

*March 7, 2008*

Earlier today I spoke with members of my economic team. They updated me on the state of our economy. This morning we learned that our economy lost 63,000 payroll jobs in February, although the unemployment rate improved to 4.8 percent.

Losing a job is painful, and I know Americans are concerned about our economy. So am I. It's clear our economy has slowed. But the good news is, we anticipated this and took decisive action to bolster the economy by passing a growth package that will put money into the hands of American workers and businesses.

I signed this growth package into law just 3 weeks ago, and its provisions are just starting to kick in. First, a growth package includes incentives for businesses to make investments in new equipment this year. These incentives are now in place, and they are starting to have an impact. My advisers tell me that investment in new equipment remains solid thus far in the first quarter.

And as more businesses take advantage of these new incentives as well as lower interest rates, we expect investment will continue to grow and that businesses will begin creating new jobs in the months ahead.

Secondly, the growth package will provide tax rebates to more than 130 million American households. Now, these rebates will begin reaching American families in May. And when the money reaches the American people, we expect they will use it to boost consumer spending, and that will spur job creation as well.

We believe that the steps we've taken, together with the actions taken by the Federal Reserve, will have a positive effect on our economy. So my message to the American people is this: I know this is a difficult time for our economy, but we recognized the problem early and provided the economy with a booster shot. We will begin to see the impact over the coming months. And in the long run, we can have confidence that so long as we pursue progrowth, low-tax policies that put faith in the American people, our economy will prosper.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. on the Colonnade at the White House.

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## Digest of Other White House Announcements

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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### March 1

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

### March 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, on the North Portico, the President participated in a photo opportunity with the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Voice of Democracy Award recipients.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace: Kerry Kennedy; Ikram U. Khan; Stephen D. Krasner; J. Robinson West; and Nancy M. Zirkin.

The President announced his intention to appoint Nancy Davenport as a member of the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Frances Fragos Townsend as a member of the President's Intelligence Advisory Board.

The President announced his intention to designate Jeffrey F. Kupfer as Acting Deputy Secretary of Energy.

#### **March 4**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in an Oval Office ceremony, he received the annual report of the Boy Scouts of America.

In the afternoon, in the second floor Family Dining Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a social lunch for King Abdullah II and Queen Rania of Jordan. Later, at DAR Constitution Hall, he made remarks to political appointees and Federal Government employees.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Dmitry Medvedev of Russia.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of Australia to the White House on March 28.

#### **March 5**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had separate telephone conversations with former Republican Presidential candidates Michael D. Huckabee, W. Mitt Romney, Fred D. Thompson, Rudolph W. Giuliani, and Duncan L. Hunter to thank them for their campaigns. Later, at the Washington Convention Center, he toured the tradeshow floor of the Washington International Renewable Energy Conference.

In the afternoon, on the North Portico, the President participated in the arrival of Senator John McCain of Arizona and his wife,

Cindy Hensley McCain. Later, in the Private Dining Room, he had lunch with Senator McCain. He then met with Republican congressional leaders.

The President announced that he has nominated James B. Cunningham to be Ambassador to Israel.

The President announced that he has nominated Neil Suryakant Patel to be Assistant Secretary for Communications Information at the Department of Commerce.

The President announced that he has nominated Alexander Passantino to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division at the Department of Labor.

The President announced that he has nominated Donald G. Teitelbaum to be Ambassador to Ghana.

The President announced that he has nominated Frank Urbancic, Jr., to be Ambassador to Cyprus.

#### **March 6**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Shi'a councilmen from Sadr City, Iraq, and Sunni city councilmen from Adhamiyah, Iraq.

In the afternoon, in the Yellow Oval Room of the Residence, the President met with the Washington Post Editorial Board.

The President announced that he has named Tobi Merritt Edwards as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Felipe Eduardo Sixto as Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs.

The President announced that he has named Nancy Theis as Special Assistant to the President and Director of Presidential Correspondence.

#### **March 7**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he participated in an interview with Major League Baseball Productions.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Miguel Sigler Amaya and Josefa Lopez Pena, brother and sister-in-law of Cuban political prisoners Ariel and Guido Sigler Amaya. Later, he traveled to Arlington, VA, where, at the Pentagon, he participated

in Defense Department briefings. He then returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Illinois and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on January 7 and continuing.

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### **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

#### ***Submitted March 5***

James B. Cunningham,  
of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Israel.

Kerry Kennedy,  
of New York, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011, vice Laurie Susan Fulton, term expired.

Ikram U. Khan,  
of Nevada, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2009, vice Holly J. Burkhalter, term expired.

Stephen D. Krasner,  
of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011, vice Charles Edward Horner, term expired.

Alexander Passantino,  
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, vice Paul DeCamp.

Neil Suryakant Patel,  
of the District of Columbia, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, vice John M.R. Kneuer.

Donald Gene Teitelbaum,  
of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ghana.

Frank Charles Urbancic, Jr.,  
of Indiana, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cyprus.

J. Robinson West,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the U.S. Institute of Peace for a term expiring January 19, 2011 (reappointment).

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### **Checklist of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

#### ***Released March 1***

Transcript of a conference call press briefing by Office of National Drug Control Policy Director John P. Walters on the 2008 National Drug Control Strategy

Fact sheet: 2008 National Drug Control Strategy

#### ***Released March 3***

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

#### ***Released March 4***

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of Australia